

Southern California Association of Governments

SCAG The Benefits
OF MEMBERSHIP





Membership Matters.

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The SCAG region is recognized as the tenth largest economy in the world.

FORUM FOR THE 10TH LARGEST ECONOMY IN THE WORLD

Over the past four decades, the Southern California Association of Governments has evolved into the largest of nearly 700 Councils of Government in the United States, functioning as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for six counties: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura. With a land mass equivalent to the country of Austria and a population approaching that of Australia, the SCAG region shares the characteristics of many nations. As one indication, it has been recognized as the tenth largest economy in the world.

Activity and movement characterize an economic powerhouse of this size. The SCAG region's vast transportation network includes 9,000 lane miles of freeway, more than 42,000 lane miles of arterial highways, several large public transit routes, four major airports (including the world's fifth largest), as well as the third-largest port complex in the world. The movement of cargo alone contributes more than \$600 billion to the value of the regional economy annually.

Although 187 cities are situated within the borders of SCAG, their individual borders provide no barrier to the issues and problems associated with such a high degree of activity. Air pollution and traffic congestion know no borders. Resources shared by all are stressed and depleted by the needs and demands of a steadily expanding population. Because no local jurisdiction can effectively address the issues alone, and the state is too big to address local challenges, a regional forum that fosters collaboration and cooperation is the logical solution. It provides that critical middle ground between state and local levels — one with the inherent ability to respond to regional infrastructure and resource needs to compete globally and flourish locally.

“Above all else, a member of SCAG has to understand they represent 18 million people in our region, not just their own cities, subregions or counties.”

– Mayor Pro Tem Ron Roberts
City of Temecula



HELPING TO RESOLVE REGIONAL CHALLENGES

In Southern California, SCAG is the forum where local leaders converge to discuss common problems and develop common solutions to shared regional challenges. With paid membership and voluntary participation distinguishing it from a traditional “government”, its goal is not to take decision-making power away from local jurisdictions. Rather, SCAG facilitates and encourages coordination and cooperation among multiple levels of government for the greater benefit of all. Success is based on the number of opinions heard and the group resolve to come to consensus on workable and fair solutions.

By joining SCAG, members are guaranteed a seat at the table where solutions to regional problems have been formulated and later implemented. From the conceptualization of the Metrolink commuter rail system, to advocacy for the creation of the Alameda Corridor, Heal the Bay and the Salton Sea Authority, SCAG’s work over the years has directly benefited the region in many ways.

“Serving as a member of the SCAG Regional Council offers important opportunities for us to work together on developing regional solutions to the problems we all face.”

– Councilmember Toni Young
City of Port Hueneme

**SCAG is the forum
to develop common
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**Now more than ever,
Southern California
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EVERY MEMBER IS IMPORTANT

Historically, SCAG members and staff have charted an aggressive and positive course for the organization, resulting in valuable and tangible benefits for the region and its inhabitants. However, now more than ever, Southern California collectively faces challenges of unprecedented proportions. Tremendous growth is projected in the SCAG region over the next 25 years, when the population will swell from 18 million to 23 million. Implementing the strategies of the Compass Growth Vision and the long-range transportation plan will be critical to maintaining sustainable development and a desired quality of life, and the best means of ensuring that we can be proud of the Southern California we leave to our children.

When it comes to materializing the collective vision for a greater Southern California, the voice and opinion of every member counts.



MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD

There are many reasons to have a seat at the SCAG table. One very important reason is financial. SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which gets updated and adopted every three years, is literally the gatekeeper that determines which specific transportation improvements within the region are going to be eligible for state and federal funding over the next twenty years. If a particular highway, road or transit improvement is not represented in the RTP, it cannot receive these kinds of funds. With public transportation spending averaging about \$10 billion annually, membership does provide a voice on how and where the funds should be spent.

Because SCAG is uniquely structured to tackle regional tasks and generate innovative strategies, it is called upon to undertake many interesting and regionally-significant projects. For example, the Federal Aviation Administration supports SCAG and its members in carrying out regional aviation system planning, a function undertaken by no other agency in the region. SCAG is also charged with coordinating the development of operational and service improvements for interregional transit systems, such as universal fare systems, and common standards for technologies

used to improve the safety and efficiency of the surface transportation system. Members with particular interest in these and other specialized planning areas have ample opportunity to share their opinions and expertise.

SCAG's newest endeavor, Southern California Compass, is the largest and most ambitious growth visioning effort ever undertaken in either the nation or the world. Implementing the specific strategies identified to achieve the growth vision will be on every member's agenda for many years to come.

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The 76-member governing board known as the Regional Council guides SCAG's ongoing policy direction.

MANY WAYS TO PARTICIPATE AND CONTRIBUTE

When a jurisdiction joins SCAG, a new seat is created on the SCAG General Assembly. Representatives to the Assembly elect officers, adopt SCAG's annual Work Program, set the agency's planning and policy priorities, and approve the study of specific problems, programs and other matters that concern the region.

The 76-member governing board known as the Regional Council guides SCAG's ongoing policy direction. Not all members automatically have a seat on the Council, but all members do have the opportunity of being chosen to represent their district by fellow district members. (There are 65 SCAG districts, each consisting of one or more cities.) District representation is one of the progressive changes instituted recently to open the floor to more voices.

All elected officials from member jurisdictions, whether or not they serve on the Regional Council, are encouraged to serve on a Task Force or seek appointment to one of SCAG's three Policy Committees. This provides members with opportunities to analyze and recommend policy positions related to the spending of state and federal dollars in the region and to expand contacts with

other organizations. Each meeting presents an occasion to help define the issues shaping Southern California's future.

In summary, SCAG provides a wide variety of participation and networking opportunities for member jurisdictions.

"RC members must have a willingness to put the time and effort into understanding the issues and the complexities outside their communities to understand the greater region."

– Councilmember Lee Ann Garcia
City of Grand Terrace

MORE CLOUT IN SACRAMENTO AND WASHINGTON

A primary priority of SCAG is to promote and protect the interests of its members in Sacramento and on Capitol Hill. Whether testifying to garner funds for regional projects, or making a case for a change in policy to cut red tape, SCAG promotes the region's interests and is the only organization that exclusively represents Southern California.

It all starts with a legislative position. SCAG staff closely monitors legislation at state and federal levels to provide members with meaningful information from which to formulate and establish an annual Legislative Program. SCAG then aggressively advocates on behalf of the region's interests to legislative delegations (2 Senators and 29 members of the House of Representatives in Washington, and 23 Senators and 41 Assemblymembers in Sacramento), other key legislators, and members of the executive branch. Frequently, Regional Council members lead these delegations.

Over the years, SCAG has been at the forefront of advocating for the region's fair share of federal and state funding for plans and programs, and has been instrumental in delivering billions of dollars to the

region. Strategically, this has involved SCAG working closely with county transportation commissions to facilitate and support the creation of transportation finance consensus programs to compete more effectively for transportation funds. Southern California transportation delegation trips coordinated by SCAG have served to present a focused and unified front to the region's potentially divergent lobbying efforts, putting the region in a position of strength. SCAG is also at the forefront of promoting innovative financing mechanisms to finance planned projects and programs.

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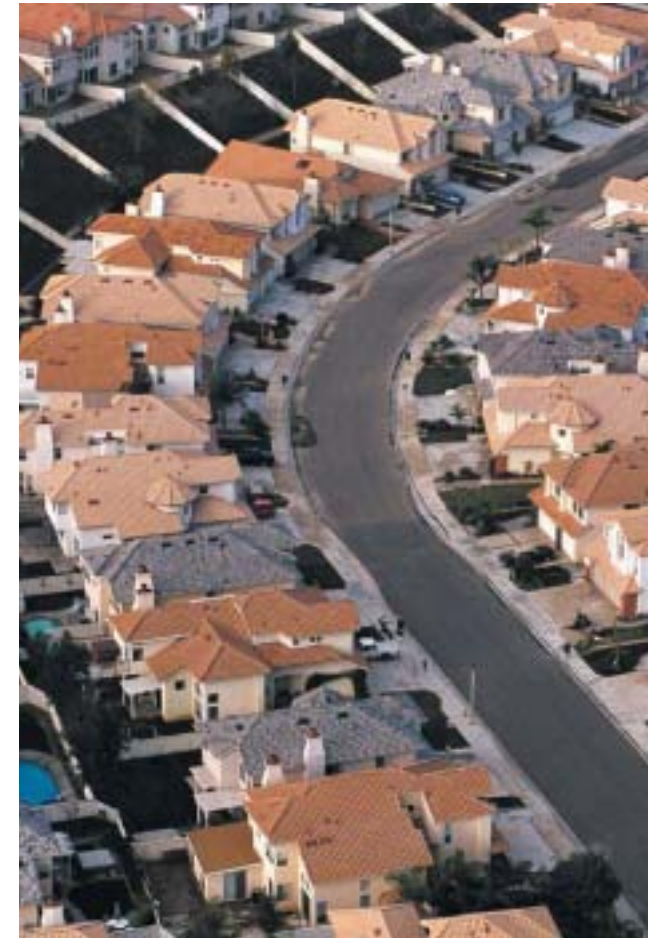
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VALUABLE INFORMATION TO HELP DECISION MAKING

From serving as a forum to identify, study and resolve regional issues to providing technical assistance and support services for local government operations, SCAG staff is focused on meeting the needs of its members.

Newly-initiated members receive a copy of the SCAG Membership Handbook, a comprehensive guide to SCAG operations and activities that includes background information on fellow members to facilitate networking and communications. A second proprietary handbook provides invaluable insights into the art and logistics of effective advocacy.

Throughout the year, members are invited to SCAG summits and conferences, including the Regional Economic Forecast Conference and the Annual Housing Summit on regionally significant housing issues. For assistance in gaining access to key people at federal agencies, SCAG extends its National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) membership privileges to individual SCAG members with special password access. Automatic electronic delivery of SCAG's monthly newsletter, eVision, keeps all members informed and up-to-date.





ASSISTANCE IN ACHIEVING LOCAL OBJECTIVES

SCAG provides the methodology, tools and training necessary to help members carry out the strategies and principles of approved regional plans. SCAG staff can also perform site-specific performance analyses and transportation/land use benefits analyses to aid in local planning. Local jurisdictions can apply the environmental policy and mitigation measures developed through SCAG's Environmental Impact Report for the Regional Transportation Plan to local projects, saving time and money.

Financial assistance also comes in other forms. SCAG regularly helps members find and secure grant funding from federal and state agencies for local projects. Additionally, SCAG supplements the planning activities of members through the financial support and funding of their subregion. An average of one million dollars is distributed among the 14 subregions each year.

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SPECIAL PRIVILEGES

As a member-driven organization, SCAG prides itself on meeting the needs and requests of its membership. Members always receive priority turn-around from a responsive and highly professional SCAG staff on requests for data, custom maps, publications or planning support, and the first 20 hours of staff time each year is complimentary. However, an even quicker way to access some information might be by going to SCAG’s website where members can use their assigned password to enter a “Members Only” section where an ever-evolving suite of services reside, including:

- ▲ Existing land use maps for each member jurisdiction
- ▲ SCAG socio-economic forecast data at small geographic levels in spreadsheet format
- ▲ Easy access to census files upon request
- ▲ Customized census data reports and maps upon request

Using a “Special Data Request” email window, members can ask about the availability of or request a copy of specific data with a guaranteed query response within 48 hours.

SCAG also offers benefits to the staff of member agencies through its free training classes on subjects ranging from GIS to spatial analysis applications.



FREE MEDIA TRAINING

Members are encouraged to take advantage of free media training seminars conducted by public relations experts. This is an important benefit to those who might be a little rusty at interviews or public speaking, as members are sometimes asked to share important regional information on programs, strategies and initiatives with the media or in public forums using easy-to-use, professionally developed, scripted presentations and Fact Sheets.

Media training seminars are available to all members.

**Dues paid to SCAG
are far less than
those assessed for
other Councils of
Government.**

GOOD VALUE

SCAG members are required to pay annual dues. However, the good news is that dues paid to SCAG are equivalent to less than 8 cents per capita, far less than those assessed for other Councils of Government locally and statewide (other regional COG dues generally range from 12-21 cents per capita).

Active participation also offers a return on investment. Regional Council representatives receive stipends for meeting participation, whether it is for monthly Policy Committee and Regional Council meetings or for participation on Task Forces. Subregional representatives appointed to Policy Committees and Task Forces also receive stipends.





QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

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“Since we are a planning organization, we need to have the ability to look 360 degrees.”

– Former Supervisor Hank Kuiper
Imperial County



Resolving Regional Challenges

Southern California Association of Governments

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